

Le livre demeure

Studies in Book History in Honour of Alison Saunders

Edited by
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assisted by Stephen Rawles



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THE USES OF NATURAL HISTORY

GEORG C. RAFF'S *NATURGESCHICHTE FÜR KINDER* (1778)
IN ITS MULTIPLE TRANSLATIONS AND MULTIPLE
RECEPTIONS¹

BY

ILDIKÓ SZ. KRISTÓF

Schoolbooks on natural history constituted an important channel of ethnographical-anthropological ideas and images, especially during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. While Western European scholarship has by now developed a long tradition of research relating to the combined areas of natural history and the emergent science of anthropology, and has also made various efforts to review critically its colonial past, in our East-Central European region such initiatives have been rather rare.² In the case of Hungary thorough archival-bibliographical-

¹ A brief version of this paper (entitled 'Representing the Order of Nature for Children. Animals, Plants and Aborigines in a German-Hungarian *Naturgeschichte*, 1799-1846') was presented at the international conference 'The Iconography of Law and Order' in June 2008 in Szeged, Hungary. This conference was organized by the Institute of English and American Studies of the University of Szeged at which Professor Alison Saunders gave one of the keynote talks. Since 1993 Alison has participated in all the Szeged *Iconology East and West* conferences, organized by my husband, György E. Szőnyi. This paper pays tribute to her on behalf of both of us.

² Some excellent studies in this field relating to Western Europe: *Cultures of Natural History*, ed. by Nicholas Jardine, James A. Secord and Emma C. Spary (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996); Emma C. Spary, *Utopia's Garden. French Natural History From Old Regime To Revolution* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000); *Colonial Botany. Science, Commerce, and Politics in the Early Modern World*, ed. by Londa Schiebinger and Claudia Swan

philological research is still to be carried out in these fields. All the more so, since the fact of possessing no colonies physically and politically did not not imply at all being exempt or immune from certain biased representations *culturally*. As my research shows, quite similar *textual and visual strategies of othering* existed in our past in East-Central Europe that are known from the representational conventions of the Atlantic empires, Spain, France or England.³

In the voluminous corpus of natural history books conveying foreign ideas in Hungary, an outstanding piece is a German schoolbook which was translated three times into Hungarian and was published throughout the late eighteenth-early nineteenth century in three different cities. It was originally entitled *Naturgeschichte für Kinder*, written by Georg Christian Raff, naturalist and teacher of history and geography at the grammar school in Göttingen, Lower Saxony, and published there for the first time in 1778.⁴

(Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005); Jorge Cañizares-Esguerra, *Nature, Empire and Nation. Explorations of the History of Science in the Iberian World* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2006); Brian W. Ogilvie, *The Science Of Describing. Natural History in Renaissance Europe* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006); Peter Mason, *Before Disenchantment. Images of Exotic Animals and Plants in the Early Modern World* (London: Reaktion Books, 2009).

³ For studies on the colonization of imagination, 'cultural colonialism', and, in general, the politics of othering and visibility, see Serge Gruzinski, *La colonisation de l'imaginaire. Sociétés indigènes et occidentalisation dans le Mexique espagnol. XVI^e-XVIII^e siècle* (Paris: Gallimard, 1988); Jas Elsner and Joan-Pau Rubiés, *Voyages and Visions. Towards a Cultural History of Travel* (London: Reaktion Books, 1999); Nicholas Thomas, *Colonialism's Culture: Anthropology, Travel and Government* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1994); *Colonial Discourse / Postcolonial Theory*, ed. by Francis Barker, Peter Hulme and Margaret Iversen (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1994); Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes. Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London: Routledge, 1992).

⁴ Raff lived between 1748-1788, and, according to the frontispieces of the German editions of his work, he functioned as a private lecturer and deputy headmaster (*Konrektor*) at the Gymnasium in Göttingen. See Anke Te Heesen, *The World in a Box. The Story of an Eighteenth-Century Picture Encyclopedia*, trans. by Ann M. Hentschel (Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 1997; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), pp. 47, 75 and 78-79; Jürgen Oelkers, 'Elementary Textbooks in the 18th century and their theory of the learning child', in *Scholarly Knowledge. Textbooks in Early Modern Europe*, ed. by Emidio Campi,

This book saw several reeditions, translations and adaptations inside as well as outside the German-speaking world. So far as I am aware, it existed—apart from the Hungarian translation—in German, Austrian, English, French, Dutch, Danish, Russian, and Slavonic-Serbian versions.⁵ Raff's schoolbook not only covered a considerable part of Europe, it seems to have reached North America, too: it is mentioned in an early nineteenth-century collection of books sold in a German settler community in the state of Ohio.⁶ The other feature that makes this book worthy of research is its illustrations. It contains twelve to fourteen page-size copperplates—either black and white or coloured images, according to the editions—that show an amazing number of plants, animals and human beings, all arranged in a certain structure and order.

In this study—which is the first carried out on Raff's *Naturgeschichte* in Hungary and which represents a particular, but not final phase of my research—I will restrict my analysis to the 'intended messages' or 'implied readings' of this book. These messages or readings, representing—as proposed by the French school of the *cultural history of reading*—the authors' and/or editors' intentions concerning the reception of their products, may be hidden both in the text and in the physical form of the book, the iconographical execution and layout (arrangement, order etc.) of the images, but also in the conditions and circumstances of the publication.⁷

Simone De Angelis and others (Paris: Droz, 2008), pp. 409-27 (pp. 420-26). For a short biography of Raff and a bibliography of his oeuvre see Johann Georg Meusel, *Lexikon der vom Jahr 1750 bis 1800 verstorbenen Deutschen Schriftsteller* (Leipzig: Gerhard Fleischer Jr, 1811), II, 10-11. A highly informative entry on him is Binder, Raff, Georg Christian, in *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie* (herausgegeben von der Historischen Kommission bei der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1888), Band 27, pp. 158-59.

⁵ The different translations came out more or less contemporaneously, during the late 18th and early 19th century. I have consulted the copies that are mentioned in this paper.

⁶ This community is Canton, OH. '2 Raff's *Naturgeschichten*' are mentioned in a list of books sent there around 1838 from Cleveland for retail sale. See Robert E. Cazden, 'The German Booktrade in Ohio Before 1848', *Ohio History. The Scholarly Journal of The Ohio Historical Society*, 84 (1998), 57-77 (p. 69).

⁷ The French 'histoire de la lecture' as a specific approach to/of cultural history was developed primarily by Roger Chartier at the turn of the 1980s and 1990s,

Let us see first what seems to have remained constant, invariable through the different editions of Raff's work. The schoolbook provides an excellent example of the physical—and visual—means by which late Enlightenment and early Romantic concepts of the natural and social order were imposed on the youth of—primarily but not exclusively Protestant—Europe. As for its intended audience, the preface of the first German edition (Göttingen 1778) says that it was aimed at 'children of every kind, rich and poor, capable and incapable of learning, diligent or idle, younger or older, five, or ten years of age or even older', i.e. for both elementary and higher levels of education.⁸ Raff's was one of the best known works on natural history for young students in the second half of the eighteenth century in German territories,⁹ and the basic composition of its intended audience did not seem to have changed much through the different editions and translations.

The most significant feature of its invariability is however that it conveyed the *same ideas and the same imagery* concerning the order of nature and society from the Eastern corner of Europe to the Westernmost one; the same systems of classification and the same visual means of depicting them—as well as something else—spread out of a German cultural centre to the West as well as the East of the continent during the late eighteenth-early nineteenth century.

These systems were based on the prevailing classifications of nature provided by two well-known scholars of the age: the Swedish surgeon and botanist, Carl Linnaeus whose *Systema naturae* had several editions and translations all over Europe from 1735 on,

see *Les usages de l'imprimé*, ed. by Roger Chartier (Paris: Fayard, 1987); Roger Chartier, 'Le monde comme représentation', *Annales E.S.C.* 6 (1989), 1505-20; idem, 'Texts, Printing, Readings', in *The New Cultural History*, ed. by Lynn Hunt (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), pp. 154-75; idem, 'Laborers and voyagers: From the Text to the Reader', *Diacritics*, 22, 2 (1992), 49-61.

⁸ My translation: Sz. K. I. See also Te Heesen, *The World in a Box*, p. 78.

⁹ Te Heesen, *The World in a Box*, p. 75, 78. According to the data provided by an online antiquarian service, Raff's schoolbook saw altogether sixteen editions until 1861 in Germany, see: <http://www.suchebiete.com/details_Antiquarische-Buecher,Raff_Georg-Christian_Naturgeschichte-Kinder,7011749.html> [accessed: 07 July 2010]

and Johann Friedrich Blumenbach, a German surgeon and professor in the university of Göttingen, whose *De generis humani varietate nativa* (1776) and *Allgemeine Naturgeschichte* (1779) became very influential at the turn of the eighteenth/nineteenth centuries.¹⁰ Raff's schoolbook was able to imprint the structures of these systems—and plenty of the composite textual and visual elements—in the minds of masses of European (and also North-American) students.

For Raff—just as for Linnaeus—nature was divided fundamentally into three 'kingdoms' or 'countries': *animals*, *plants*, and *minerals*. Heading the animals—and also dominating all the other 'kingdoms' or 'countries'—there was the group of *Man*, whose description—relying rather randomly on skin colour, height and territorial distribution—seems to have been based upon Linnaeus rather than the more elaborated classification of Blumenbach.¹¹

Inside these 'kingdoms' or 'countries', however, Raff has also constructed certain sub-groups or 'scenes' which he thought more attractive and understandable for children. He has regrouped plants, animals and human beings—minerals only to a lesser extent—into what might be termed *spatial-geographical* and in a way also *cognitive* clusters or sub-groups that appeared in the images as well as in the text of the schoolbook.

These sub-groups have been arranged in a special way and Raff has given some concrete instructions—in the *Preface* as well as scattered in the main text—as to how to imagine this order. If my understanding is correct, these clusters or 'scenes' were thought to be aligned along a *linear itinerary* departing from an imagined centre, and crossing different 'worlds' that have been arranged in concentric circles. In the very centre of these circles there was The

¹⁰ See Lisbet Koerner, *Linnaeus: Nature and Nation* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999) and Johann F. Blumenbach, *The Anthropological Treatises of Johann Friedrich Blumenbach* (Adamant Media Corporation, Elibron Classics Replica Edition, 2005).

¹¹ In the end of the chapter on 'Man' long passages have been devoted to the so-called 'wild men' and 'wild women'—human children raised by animals and found in the forests in different parts of Europe—which itself testifies to the great influence of the Swedish scholar's concepts on Raff. For a post-colonial criticism of the Linnaeus's system of nature, see Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, pp. 24-37. Blumenbach refuted 'feral men' as a distinct species of *Homo sapiens*, see his criticism of Linnaeus in Blumenbach, *The Anthropological Treatises*, pp. 163-66.

House (of the reader), represented—so far as can be judged from the picture of silkworm breeding (Plate III)¹²—in a basic, stereotyped ‘European’ way; while moving linearly away from it, the ‘Little Traveller’—as the child or student was often called in Raff’s text—penetrated first the world of *vicinity*, i.e. the well known, *domestic* world: such as the Garden (Plate III), the Courtyard (Plate IX), the Cultivated land (Plate VI), the Meadow (Plate VI), the Pasture (Plate V), the Lake (Plate V); and then he arrived in the world of *far-away*, i.e. the *wild*, less known regions: the Forest (Plate VII), the East and the North of Europe (Plates VIII, IX and XI), the Sea/ocean (Plate XI), and finally, as it seems, some other continents (Plate I, II, X and XIV). It is an *imaginary landscape*, a kind of *topography* or *geography* that is revealed by the images of the plates and references to them in the texts.¹³

If we consider the plates in the order in which they are bound in the book, structures of a similar order start to unfold. It is a *world geography*, the plates beginning with some stereotyped representations of the inhabited world. The reader finds pictures that evoke China, the East-Indian islands (Plate I; see Fig. 1), Middle and North America (Plate II; see Figs 2 and 3), and then,

¹² Hereafter I am referring to the plate numbers of the first Hungarian translation of Raff’s schoolbook: *Természeti Historia a’ Gyermeknek. Mellyet...magyarúl kiadott, és kinyomtatott Fábíán József* (Veszprém: Számmer Mihály, 1799). The order of the plates does not seem to have undergone many changes in the different editions during the late 18th century. Some modifications in the individual images did occur, but I do not have enough space here, however, to consider them.

¹³ The preface to the German editions says: ‘Nun gehen wir spazieren, und suchen Pflanzen, Thiere und Steine auf; nun schiffen wir in dem weiten Weltmeer herum, und sehen Seehunde und Walfische fangen.’ See *Naturgeschichte für Kinder* (Tübingen: Wilhelm Heinrich Schramm und Johann Friedrich Valz, 1787), *Vorrede* (pages not numbered). For more details of the author’s seemingly conscious geographical method in the teaching of natural history see especially the introduction to ‘Pflanzenreich’ or ‘Vegetable Kingdom’. Raff has written a schoolbook of geography, too, see his *Geographie für Kinder. Zum Gebrauch auf Schulen*, 2 vols (Göttingen, 1776; Göttingen: Johann Christian Dieterich, 1790, 1792). This work is mentioned in Meusel’s literary lexicon in 1811, see *Lexikon*, II, 10–11. It also saw a Hungarian translation: *Geografiája a’ gyengébbek elméjéhez alkalmaztatott, és magyarúl kiadattott* (Vác: Ambro Ferentz, 1791).

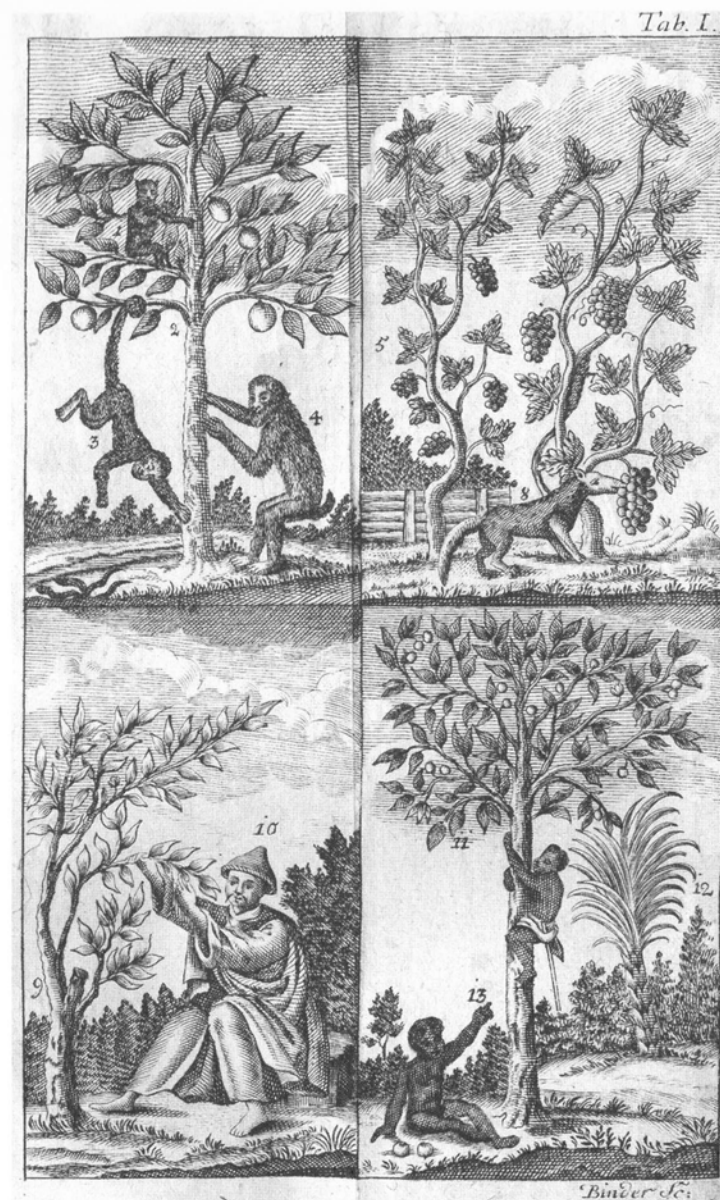


Fig. 1. *Természeti História a’ Gyermeknek. Mellyet Raff György Kristián Göttingai Tanító Után ... Magyarúl kiadott, és kinyomtatott Fábíán József*. Veszprémben nyomtatott Számmer Mihály betűivel 1799. Plate I (Courtesy of National Széchényi Library, Budapest). Reduced.



Fig. 2. *Természeti História a' Gyermeknek.* Mellyet Raff György Kristián Göttingai Tanító Után ... Magyarúl kiadott, és kinyomtattatott Fábán József. Wespzprémbe nyomtattatott Számmer Mihály betűivel 1799. Upper section of Plate II; without a figure of North American Indian
(Courtesy of National Széchenyi Library, Budapest). Reduced.



Fig. 3. *Természet História Gyermekek' Számára.* Raff György Keresztely, Göttingai Oktató' Eredeti Kiadása Után K.szült Második Magyarítás. Kassán. Nyomtatta 's kiadta Werfer Károly, cs. kir. priv. könyvnyomtató. 1837. Upper section of Plate II; with a figure of a North American Indian woman
(Courtesy of National Széchenyi Library, Budapest). Reduced.



Fig. 4. *Természeti História a' Gyermeknek.* Mellyet Raff György Kristián Göttingai Tanító Után ... Magyarúl kiadott, és kinyomtattatott Fábán József. Wespzprémbe nyomtattatott Számmer Mihály betűivel 1799. Plate XIV.
(Courtesy of National Széchenyi Library, Budapest). Reduced.



Fig. 5. *Természeti História a' Gyermekeknek*. Mellyet Raff György Kristián Göttingai Tanító Után ... Magyarúl kiadott, és kinyomtatott Fábíán Jósef. Weszprémben nyomtatott Számmer Mihály betűivel 1799. Lower section of Plate IX (Courtesy of National Széchényi Library, Budapest). Reduced.



Fig. 6. *Természeti História a' Gyermekeknek*. Mellyet Raff György Kristián Göttingai Tanító Után ... Magyarúl kiadott, és kinyomtatott Fábíán Jósef. Weszprémben nyomtatott Számmer Mihály betűivel 1799. Middle section of Plate VIII (Courtesy of National Széchényi Library, Budapest). Reduced.

rather randomly, Western Europe (Plate III), the European 'East' (Plate VIII; see Fig. 6) and 'North' (Plate IX; see Fig. 5), and finally Africa (Plate X and XIV; see Fig. 4). So, I would argue that the process of learning, that of gaining knowledge about nature and society is proposed—iconographically as well as textually—as a *journey*, an *imaginary travel of discovery* for the young students. This is one of the most significant 'intended messages' of Raff's schoolbook, itself embedded in the period which was

characterised by the rise of the culture of (long-distance) travel and explorations.¹⁴

Another important message is, however, that this journey is to be made rather by *men* alone. In each and every translations of the schoolbook that I could consult the 'Little Traveller' seems to have been primarily male. He has been referred to with forms of masculinity—such as 'Mein Sohn', 'Kleiner Mann', 'édes Fiam', 'Fiatskáiim' [Hungarian, meaning 'my dear son', 'my little sons'] etc., and the pictures themselves seem to have strengthened and confirmed this idea. Natural history (and travels of discovery) were expected and taught to be highly gendered activities in the age.¹⁵

As well as plants and animals, the individual images also provided the students (and their teachers) with a number of *visual patterns* as to how to imagine the different peoples of the world.

These pictures seem to imply a certain Eurocentric approach, in its rather Western European manifestation. As for non-European

¹⁴ See P. J. Marshall and Glyndwr Williams, *The Great Map of Mankind. British Perceptions of the World in the Age of Enlightenment* (London: J. M. Dent & Sons, 1982); Tim Fulford, Debbie Lee and Peter J. Kitson, *Literature, Science and Exploration in the Romantic Era. Bodies of Knowledge* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004); Elsner and Rubiés, *Voyages and Visions*.

¹⁵ The English translation mentioned once a certain 'little Emily', but most of the time it referred explicitly to boys as readers and students. See *A System of Natural History: adapted for the instruction of youth, in the form of a dialogue*, 2 vols (Edinburgh: Printed for G. Mudie and Son, South Bridge and London: Printed for J. Johnson and G. G. & J. Robinson, 1796), I, p. 86. The second and the third Hungarian translation spoke of 'kis barátai és barátnéid' (your little friends and female friends) at a certain place in the text, but they too meant overwhelmingly male readers as audience. See *Természet História Gyermekek' számára. Második magyarítás* (Kassa: Werfer Károly, 1835), p. 15 and *Természet Historiája Gyermekek' számára. Harmadik, javított kiadás. Kijavította Stancsics Mihál* (Pest: Emich Gusztáv, 1846), p. 3. And the German editions themselves referred to 'kleinen Freunden und Freundinnen' in the same place in the text, but as a whole they themselves seem to have counted with male readership rather. *Naturgeschichte*, 1787, p. xxiv. Despite the contribution of so many important women to 18th century science—as shown, for example, in Patricia Fara, *Pandora's Breeches. Women, Science & Power in the Enlightenment* (London: Pimlico, 2004) and Karen O'Brien, *Women and Enlightenment in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009)—the overall social expectation still seems to have favoured male scientists in late 18th–early 19th century Western (and also Eastern) Europe.

indigenous peoples, we have the following images. Two 'Asian' scenes: one of them showing a sitting Chinese character picking leaves from a tea bush, and another depicting two East-Indian natives of dark skin, one climbing upon a fruit tree (Plate I; see Fig. 1). Two African scenes: one showing a so-called 'Hottentot' family of dark skin in the foreground of a landscape;¹⁶ they wear only loincloths, headbands and some jewellery, and their village made of simple huts is also to be seen (Plate XIV; see Fig. 4); in the other picture we see a rather simplified, basic figure of an unnamed and non-identifiable African native of black skin sitting on the back of a camel (Plate X). There are two American scenes, too: one showing a Central American native—or slave—of dark skin carrying a bunch of sugar canes, and with a simple hut in the background, while the other picture—from the early nineteenth-century editions on—depicts a North American Indian woman wearing nothing but a short skirt and a necklace, carrying a piece of basketry and with another, bigger basket of fish at her feet (Plate II; see Figs 2. and 3).¹⁷

As for the peoples of Europe, there is first of all the image of silkworm breeding, depicting two women and a young boy wearing standard European-style clothes of the late eighteenth century

¹⁶ The term 'Hottentot' was applied rather loosely to South African native peoples in general during the 18th and 19th centuries; more precisely it referred to the Khoikhoi people.

¹⁷ Raff's schoolbook is closer in time to James Fenimore Cooper's age and the more naturalistic descriptions of American Indian life (especially in the North-East area) provided by late 18th century European travellers, than to that of Karl May and his highly moralized, idealized figure of Winnetou in the second half of the 19th century. On stereotyping American Indians see Devon Abbot Mihesuah, *American Indians. Stereotypes & Realities* (1996; Atlanta, GA: Clarity Press, 2001) and Tim Fulford, *Romantic Indians. Native Americans, British Literature, and Transatlantic Culture 1756-1830* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006). As far as Raff's image represents the continent itself, there may be certain iconographical conventions applied in the figure of the American Indian woman; although not without exceptions, the American continent was represented historically by female allegorical figures, see for example *Woman and Art In Early Modern Latin America*, ed. by Kellen Kee McIntyre and Richard E. Phillips (Leiden: Brill, 2007), p. 249 and Sara Day, "'With Peace and Freedom Blest!' Woman as Symbol in America, 1590-1800", in *American Women. A Library of Congress Guide for the Study of Women's History and Culture in the United States* (Washington D.C.: Library of Congress, 2001).

and working in a pavillon (Plate III; in the early nineteenth-century editions they are to be found inside an ordinary house). They seem to represent the 'world of home', the most familiar scene with which the students were expected to identify. And, we have the depiction of two other particular peoples: the Lapps (or Sami people) representing the 'North' (Plate IX; see Fig. 5), and the Polish representing the 'East' (Plate VIII; see Fig. 6). From the direction of the imagined home of the reader, both were expected to look—and be interpreted by the young readers—as something like *close aliens* or *inner others* in the same continent. In the Lapp scene two men are shown in the foreground of a 'Nordic' landscape, one is standing, wearing elaborate fur clothes and holding a stick (spear?) in his hand, while the other is sitting, a whip in his hand, in a triangle-shaped sleigh (the famous *pulkka* or *bulke* of the Sami people) pulled by a reindeer. The Poles are represented as two men in the forest: a younger and an older musician wearing peculiar clothes—long coats tied with a belt on their waists—playing trumpet-like musical instruments and having a big bear dance to the music.

While the Lapp scene—together with its detailed textual description of the life of the reindeer keepers—was presented as an 'accurate' ethnographical demonstration, the funny, joyful Polish scene might have had some anecdote or tale belonging to it in the background. It is nevertheless evident that both peoples were presented as *strangers* in a Europe imagined, as it were, somewhere from its 'Western' corner.¹⁸

Beyond simplifying and stereotyping peoples, the most important strategy of othering used in their depiction is what I would call *hierarchization* or *barbarization*, i.e. representing and arranging them according to the particular historical ideas of the Enlightenment.

¹⁸ The figure of the Lapp is a commonplace in 18th-century books of natural history. Lapland had a special importance for Linnaeus himself: he took a journey there in 1732, wrote about its flora (*Flora Lapponica*, 1737) and, in general, considered the Lapps a happy people as well as 'our teacher', see Koerner, *Linnaeus*, pp. 56-81. The act of bear-dancing seems to have been a common stereotype attached to the Eastern Slavic peoples in general; another version would associate it with the Russians.

If we take a look at the *ensemble* of the geographical images of Raff and consider *what* is actually represented here and how, we soon realize that this is not (only) geography. The plates suggest, I would argue, a version of the *linear concept of history*, which, for so many philosophers of the Enlightenment, included the hypothesis of a universal and *stadial* way of development of the human societies of the world, that is one seen as a sequence of 'stades' or stages.¹⁹ The image of the half-naked, tree-climbing 'East-Indian' could represent the beginning (gathering societies), the North American Indian woman, the camel riding African and the reindeer keeping Lapps the next stage (hunting and animal keeping societies), the Chinese—depicted in later editions with pagodas—could stand for the so-called 'half-civilized stade', and the various industries and elements of material culture—silkworm breeding, whalehunting (Plate XI), sugar production as well as (European-style) houses, pavillons, huge ships and firearms—would represent the 'end' of history, i.e. Europe. Even the general division of Europe itself—suggested by the ensemble of the visual world of the schoolbook—into a materially developed, industrious 'West' characterized by an indoor dwelling life-style, and an outdoor living, nature/forest-cultivating 'North' and 'East' living close to its animals is a good example of the opposing poles or 'stades' of such an imaginary hierarchical history.

It is impossible to determine exactly whose concepts are to be found—literally—behind the scenes; apart from Linnaeus and Blumenbach there are no hints in Raff's text.²⁰ The question of

¹⁹ According to the classical survey of Marvin Harris, from Vico to Turgot, from Montesquieu and Condorcet to Ferguson and Robertson a great number of scholars contributed to the evolutionary line of thought so characteristic in the early history of Western anthropology, see Marvin Harris, *The Rise of Anthropological Theory* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1968), pp. 27–35; see also Paul B. Wood, 'The Science of Man,' in *Cultures of Natural History*, ed. by Jardine, Secord and Spary, pp. 197–210 and Alan Barnard, *History and Theory in Anthropology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 17–26.

²⁰ Raff does not seem to have taken over the exact details and terminology of Blumenbach's division of humankind, although the latter's *De generis humani varietate nativa* appeared in 1776 in Göttingen, i.e. only two years before the first publication of Raff's schoolbook in 1778. The five basic categories of humans (*peoples* in Raff's terms) that are enumerated in the chapter on

authorship and origin however is not as important here as the fact that the schoolbook provided—especially by means of its images—a *vulgarized, popular version of the general idea of stadial history*, and contributed to the distribution of this powerful—but fundamentally so incorrect and unjust—concept all over Europe (and also North America).²¹

Let us now look at the different editions and translations of the schoolbook and consider some aspects of the *changes* that occurred there.

The fact that Raff's work came originally from a German Protestant cultural-scientific context had an additional and political significance for its editions in the Kingdom of Hungary. Beyond the fact that Göttingen was highly appreciated as a scientific centre by the Hungarian—mostly noble and Protestant—students who regularly attended its university in the second half of the eighteenth century and during the nineteenth,²² each of the three Hungarian editions of the schoolbook—Veszprém 1799, Kassa (Košice-Kaschau) 1835, and Pest 1846 (this latter was more of an improvement and updating of the second, 1835 translation)—was deeply embedded in the movements of *political resistance* and *national awakening* that emerged in Hungary against

'Man' and shown in the pictures—European, north or continental Asian, east or island Asian, African and American—do seem to correlate, however, with the five *races* distinguished by Blumenbach (Caucasian, Asian, Malay, African, and American).

²¹ I do not intend to investigate in depth the question of the origin of the plates. They constitute a mixture of a didactic-descriptive ethnographical-botanical-zoological majority and an apparently emblematic minority (see especially the picture of the fox and the vineyard in Plate I, in the upper section of Fig. 1), so a huge amount of the respective historical iconographical tradition—including the emblematic natural history books of the Renaissance (surveyed, for example by William B. Ashworth, 'Emblematic Natural History of the Renaissance', in *Cultures of Natural History*, ed. by Jardine, Secord and Spary, pp. 17–37 showing plenty of images of the fox) as well as the illustrations of the early modern editions of Aesop's fables—should be investigated to establish the provenance of these images. Such research would be desirable, but especially on the part of German scholars.

²² László Szögi, *Magyarországi diákok németországi egyetemeken és főiskolákon, 1789–1919* (Budapest: ELTE Levéltár, 2001) and István Futaky, *Göttinga. A göttingeni Georg-August Egyetem magyarországi és erdélyi kapcsolatai a felvilágosodás idején és a reformkor kezdetén* (Budapest: ELTE Levéltár, 2007).

the Austrian Habsburg domination during the late eighteenth-early nineteenth century. The protagonists of these movements—recruited, again and again, mostly from the nobility of Hungary—struggled for various political and cultural goals during these decennia: political self-determination, scientific and cultural independence, the modernization of the feudal structures of the country, the elevation—legal, cultural, educational improvement—of the peasants. Opposing the official, state-supported use of the German and Latin languages in education and in science, they fought for the introduction of Hungarian, and as opposed to the official, state-promoted Catholic religion, they supported—mostly but not exclusively—the Protestant cause.²³

Each of the three Hungarian translators—József Fábián, a learned pastor of the Reformed Church who identified with many ideas of the French and German Enlightenment, Péter Vajda, a journalist/novelist turned peasant of Lutheran religion who proposed reforms of the Lutheran education system, and Mihály Táncsics, a radical political writer who sympathized with the ideas of early utopian socialism—belonged to certain branches as well as phases of this movement.²⁴ In such circumstances Raff's schoolbook underwent some remarkable changes and was exposed to specific uses.

The 'Hungarian Raff' was aimed to be used mostly in elementary education and *village schools*, too.²⁵ Accordingly, certain changes have been made in the text to make these editions less scientific, more simple, more easily digestible. Footnotes for example, of which there had been a great number in the eighteenth-century German editions—and which abound in the English or the French versions, too—were reduced in number, references to scholars and scientific works tended to be abandoned, Latin terms

²³ About this period of Hungarian history see László Kontler, *Millenium in Central Europe. A History of Hungary* (Budapest: Atlantis Publishing House, 1999), pp. 191–259.

²⁴ The first Hungarian translation is mentioned in 1811 in Meusel (*Lexikon*, II, 11), though with a wrong date.

²⁵ As Péter Vajda, the second Hungarian translator remarked in 1835: 'If only each village school could get a copy of it; then even our peasant children could get polished and strip off their current rudeness.' *Természet História Gyermeknek' számára*, p. vi. (My translation: I. Sz. K.).

'hungarianized'. It seems that the actual social-cultural context of the publication vested the Hungarian translations with a special *political* meaning: for some groups of readers at least, this Göttingen schoolbook was conceived—and used—as a *cultural weapon* against the hated Habsburg monarchy, and the cultural inequalities of the prevailing feudal society.²⁶

If we compare the Hungarian editions to the English, French and other translations, it seems that Raff's schoolbook was adopted somewhat differently in different cultural contexts.

The reasons for translating it in Great Britain, for example, seem to have been more *scientific*, *pedagogical* and *moral*. As R. H., author of the *Preface* of the Edinburgh-London edition of 1796 tells us,²⁷ it was needed since it was considered 'the most compendious system of all even the most recently discovered facts in Natural History that will be easily found', and the one providing the best

²⁶ As Péter Vajda says in the preface of the 1835 edition: 'we can surely say that we cannot expect to have a more useful *natural history* than this one [i.e. Raff]. The Germans have made it perfect, they reprinted it in numerous editions, and the Germans, in their country of sciences, tend to have a feel for it. Let us follow them, let us enlighten our descendants' minds by useful books.' *Természet História Gyermeknek' számára*, p. vi. (My translation: I. Sz. K.). This translation saw a reedition two years later in the same town, Kassa: *Természet História Gyermeknek' számára*. It is also significant that a good number of copies of the different German editions are available in Hungarian libraries, such as the National Széchenyi Library, the Library of the Academy and the University Library in Budapest as well as the Somogyi Library in Szeged. I was able to consult the following ones there: *Naturgeschichte für Kinder* (Wien: Johann Thomas Trattner, 1785); *Naturgeschichte für Kinder* (Tübingen, 1787); *Naturgeschichte für Kinder* (Wien: Johann Thomas Trattner, 1791); *Naturgeschichte für Kinder. Besorgt von F. A. A. Meyer* (Göttingen, 1792); *Naturgeschichte für Kinder. Besorgt von F. A. A. Meyer* (Reutlingen: Fleischbauer und Bohm, 1814). For more details of the Hungarian—as well as other—translations see the longer version of this study forthcoming (in Hungarian) in *Tabula*, a periodical of cultural anthropology published by the Museum of Ethnography, Budapest.

²⁷ The first—and apparently only—English translation came out in 1796; it was entitled *A System of Natural History: adapted for the instruction of youth, in the form of a dialogue* and was printed for a London and an Edinburgh publisher: for J. Johnson, and G. G. & J. Robinson in London, and for G. Mudie and Son, in Edinburgh. Its copies are to be found in various libraries in England as well as in Scotland. In October 2009 I had the opportunity to consult those kept in the British Library, London, the Bodleian Library, Oxford, and the special collections of the University Libraries of Edinburgh and Glasgow.

available teaching method i.e. a *dialogue* between an imaginary teacher and his pupil(s).²⁸ The author of the *Preface* spoke in a somewhat pious tone and argued for 'useful books' that do not 'amuse idle folly, or ... foment evil passions'.²⁹ He also evaluated some other books of natural history in use at that time in his country, comparing it to Raff's schoolbook: the work of Buffon is 'too voluminous, too elaborately eloquent', that of Goldsmith is 'pleasing, but inaccurate and imperfect', that of Smellie is 'too much tainted with a pert superficial spirit of infidelity', and 'none of the *Lilliputian* compends... is sufficiently complete or correct, or even recent in its information'.³⁰ So, a thorough local study of the exact circumstances of Raff's adoption in Great Britain could reveal much about the *procedure of selection* in the contemporary curricula of elementary and higher education, but it should also concern Raff's reception in *Scotland* considering that it was published and probably translated in Edinburgh, that its *Preface* itself dates from that city, and that the university libraries of Edinburgh, Glasgow, and Aberdeen all have copies of it.³¹

The English translation leads us directly to the French, since 'it has been executed from the French, not from the original German', for which R. H., author of the English *Preface* gave the following reasons: 'the work was understood to have been improved in the

²⁸ *A System of Natural History*, I, pp. v-vi.

²⁹ *A System of Natural History*, I, pp. iv-v.

³⁰ *A System of Natural History*, I, pp. vi-vii. The high prestige of Raff's schoolbook is shown by the fact that the library of Joseph Banks himself had a copy of one of the early Göttingen editions (1781) in German. It is to be found currently in the British Library, London, and has Banks's *ex libris* in it; see *Naturgeschichte für Kinder* (Göttingen: Johann Christian Dieterich, 1781).

³¹ The *Preface* does not reveal the name of the translator. It seems however that the work was known and even expected in some Edinburgh scientific circles such as the Society of Physicians, since one of the authors of the 'Commentaries' of the latter wrote for the year 1795: 'An English translation of this work has been for some time in the press, at Edinburgh, and probably will soon be published. It will, we hope, tend not a little to facilitate the study of a science with which no one, particularly no medical practitioner, should be unacquainted.' See *Medical Commentaries for the Year M.DCC.XCV. Exhibiting a Concise View of the Latest and Most Important Discoveries In Medicine and Medical Philosophy*, collected and ed. by Andrew Duncan (Edinburgh: Printed for G. Mudie and Son, South Bridge and for G. G. & J. Robinson, London, 1795), Decade Second, x, pp. 387-88.

French version. And the German language has been hitherto little studied among us'.³²

The author who carried out the 'improvement' of the German original was a certain M. Perrault. The first French edition was published in 1786—that is, ten years earlier than the English one—in Strasbourg and Paris.³³ There seem to have been some further French editions issued after the French revolution as well—such as in Paris (and probably, Copenhagen), 1791; Amsterdam, 1793; and London, 1794—and Perrault's Raff also entered literary bibliographies like *La France littéraire* of Joseph-Marie Quérard (Paris, 1835).³⁴ It seems that Raff became more popular in France than in Great Britain.

The reasons for adopting his schoolbook in France seem to have been quite similar to those that I suggested in the case of Great Britain, with a small but significant difference. The French *Préface*—which is entirely different from the English one—itself emphasizes motifs of instruction and science, but the pious, moral overtone that characterizes the Edinburgh *Preface* is completely missing from it. Remaining within the limits of a clear, secular scientific discourse, it values natural history highly as something that 'tient nécessairement, essentiellement, à tout ce qu'il nous est utile de savoir *dans la vie civile*', and that figures as 'source générale de toutes les connoissances qui font la base de la société, du commerce, de l'industrie, des arts...'³⁵ It is this emphasis on civil society, social life in its material-natural surroundings, and the

³² *A System of Natural History*, I, p. x.

³³ *Abrégé d'histoire naturelle pour l'instruction de la jeunesse, imité de l'allemand de M. Raff par M. Perrault* (Strasbourg: Amand Koenig et Paris: Théophil Barrois, 1786).

³⁴ Joseph-Marie Quérard, *La France littéraire ou Dictionnaire Bibliographique des savants, historiens et gens de lettres de la France ainsi que des littérateurs étrangers qui ont écrit en Français, plus particulièrement pendant les XVIII^e et XIX^e siècles* (Paris: Firmin Didot frères Libraires, 1835), Tome Septième, p. 62, 434. Perrault's Raff is also mentioned in German literary bibliographies like that of Meusel (*Lexikon*, II, 11), or the one included in *Allgemeine Literaturzeitung* (1787), IV, p. 734 (entry on 'Naturgeschichte'). The 1791 (Paris and probably Copenhagen: Royez) and the 1793 (Amsterdam: Dufour) editions are cited in Quérard, p. 62 and 434. And the 1794 new edition (London: s. n.) is included in Émile Péhant, *Catalogue méthodique de la Bibliothèque publique de la Ville de Nantes* (Nantes: A. Guéraud et C^{ie}, 1861), p. 45.

³⁵ *Abrégé d'histoire naturelle*, 1786, p. 3.

process of socializing children into it that makes the French introduction unique, and it is primarily from this *social* and *cognitive* point of view that Raff's schoolbook is appreciated there.

Another set of changes that Perrault has made to the French edition—and which the English themselves took over later on—is to be found in a different register. Devoting long passages to the function of the tale—'la fable'—in the *Préface*,³⁶ he has transformed the role of the *animals* in the text by changing their lively, 'oral', *first person* talks included originally in the German—and later on the Hungarian—editions into descriptive, 'scientifique' *third person* narratives. The animals have changed from 'agens et interlocuteurs', as explained in the *Préface*, simple 'objets d'observation'.³⁷ These changes—so remarkable that even German contemporaries noted them³⁸—should be studied more closely, since it seems that they relate to some fundamental cultural differences in the tradition and functions of storytelling as well as in esthetics and pedagogy in late eighteenth century Europe.

I do not have enough space available here to discuss the peculiarities of other translations that I have consulted. The Slavonic-Serbian translation (by Joakim Vujić, 1809) could have quite similar cultural-political implications—as an event of *Serbian* national awakening—as we saw in the case of the Hungarian editions, and, perhaps the Russian translations (1785, 1796) themselves had their own political motivations in modernizing, 'westernizing' local culture.³⁹

³⁶ It is not said that Perrault himself authored the *Préface*, but the arguments—unique to the French editions—concerning 'la fable' and its uses in French social life vs. education may suggest such a possibility. See *Abrégé d'histoire naturelle*, pp. 24–39. The translator Perrault's first name is never mentioned. It may be an adopted or fictional name, alluding to Charles Perrault and his *contes de fée*.

³⁷ *Abrégé d'histoire naturelle*, p. 24.

³⁸ 'Hr. P. [Herr Perrault] scheint die deutschen Uebersetzer rechtfertigen zu wollen, die uns mit elenden französischen Produktion beschenken; doch hat er mehr geleistet wie diese, er hat den Stil sehr veredelt, lässt das Schwein nicht seine eigene Geschichte in den schmutzigsten Ausdrücken erzählen, und hat einige gute Zusätze geliefert, die in den That zu richtigern Ideen bey den Kindern Anlass geben.' *Allgemeine Literaturzeitung* (1787), p. 737.

³⁹ As for the Austrian editions, I could study the following ones: *Naturgeschichte für Kinder* (Vienna: Johann Thomas Trattner, 1785 and 1791). The only edition

Manifest in such 'domesticating' efforts, what seems to have changed, all in all, from translation to translation are the *cultural uses* of Raff's schoolbook, or—to borrow the term by which recent research in the history and anthropology of translation has designated a new international approach parallel to the French 'histoire de la lecture'—its 'cultural translation'.⁴⁰

As we have seen, between the 1780s and the 1840s school-children from Göttingen to Paris and Copenhagen, and from Glasgow to Pest and St Petersburg seem to have been provided with the same stereotypes and patterns concerning not only the order of nature but the different peoples in it. In this sense, Raff's schoolbook creates a *bridge* between the different cultures, and testifies, for example, to how much the European 'East' and 'West' belonged together—at least in this field of natural and social imagination.

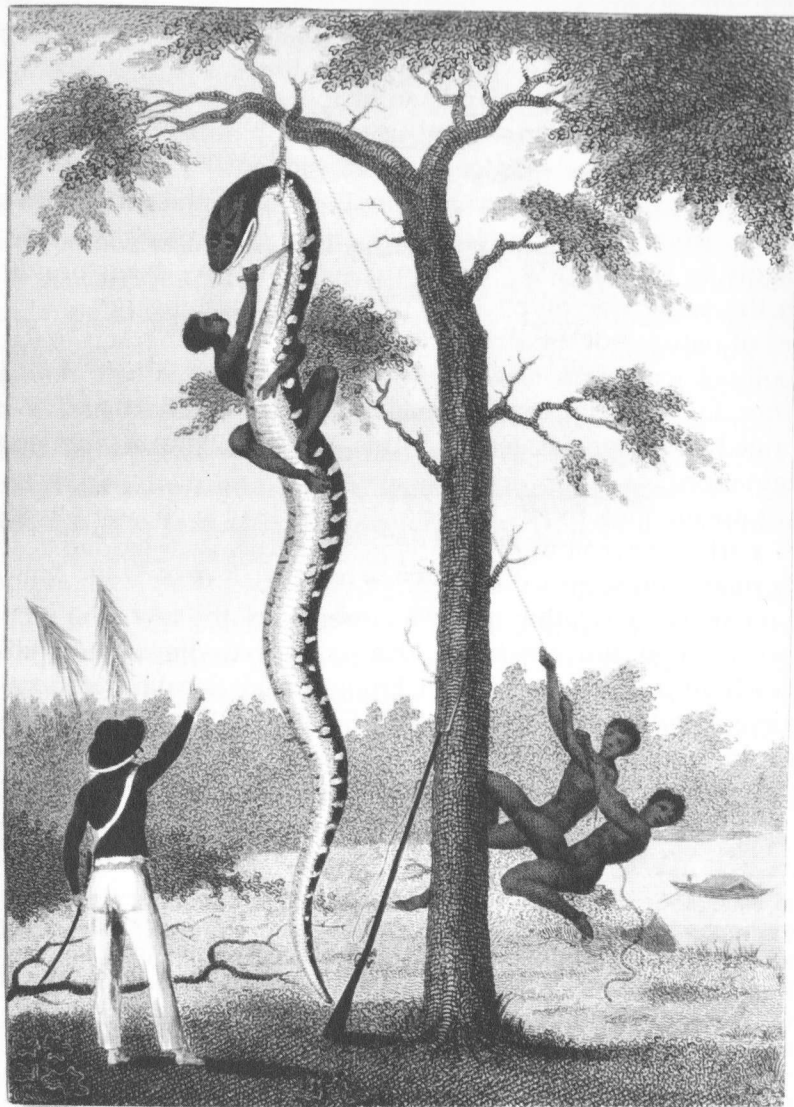
Let me mention finally one more example of such connections.

A particular, coloured frontispiece picture was added to the early nineteenth-century Hungarian editions of Raff's schoolbook, and a new story relating to it was inserted in the text. The picture shows a huge *Boa constrictor* that is said to have been killed somewhere in 'Surinám' by an English soldier called Stedman.⁴¹ The event had taken place indeed in Suriname, South America, but was told originally by a Scots-Dutch soldier in Dutch service there, namely John Gabriel Stedman whose diary was published as

in Slavonic-Serbian that I currently know of is *Êstestvoslovie v polzu naipače iunosti spisanno na nêmeckîi êzik...prevedenno Ioakimom Vuičem* (Buda, 1809). (Let me express my gratitude to Larisa Kocić Zámbo and Trpimir Vedriš for their help in understanding this text.) Two editions in Russian are listed in worldcat.org: *Estestvennaja istorija dlja malolesnyh detej* (St Petersburg, 1785 and 1796). An early Danish translation is mentioned in Meusel, *Lexikon*, II, 11: 'Dänisch nach der 4ten Ausgabe von F. Hansen. Kopenh. 1784. 8.' But as far as I could check it on worldcat.org, there were more editions in Copenhagen even in the first half of the 19th century (1791, 1801, 1811, 1819). Quérard's literary bibliography mentions a Paris and Copenhagen edition from 1791, but it was probably in French, see Quérard, p. 434. Finally, I know of a Dutch edition of 1798 as well, a copy of it is to be found in the Bodleian Library, Oxford: *De Natuurlijke Historie* (Amsterdam, 1798).

⁴⁰ See *Cultural Translation in Early Modern Europe*, ed. by Peter Burke and R. Po-chia Hsia (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

⁴¹ *Természeti Históriaja Gyermekek' számára*, 1846, p. 175.



The skinning of the Aboma Snake, shot by Cap. Stedman.

Fig. 7. J. G. Stedman, *Narrative, of a Five Years' Expedition, against the Revolted Negroes of Surinam, in Guiana, on the Wild Coast of South America*. 2nd ed, corrected. London, 1806, Vol I., picture facing p.182: 'The skinning of the Aboma Snake, shot by Cap. Stedman.' (University of Glasgow, Library, Sp Coll RQ 1715). Reduced.

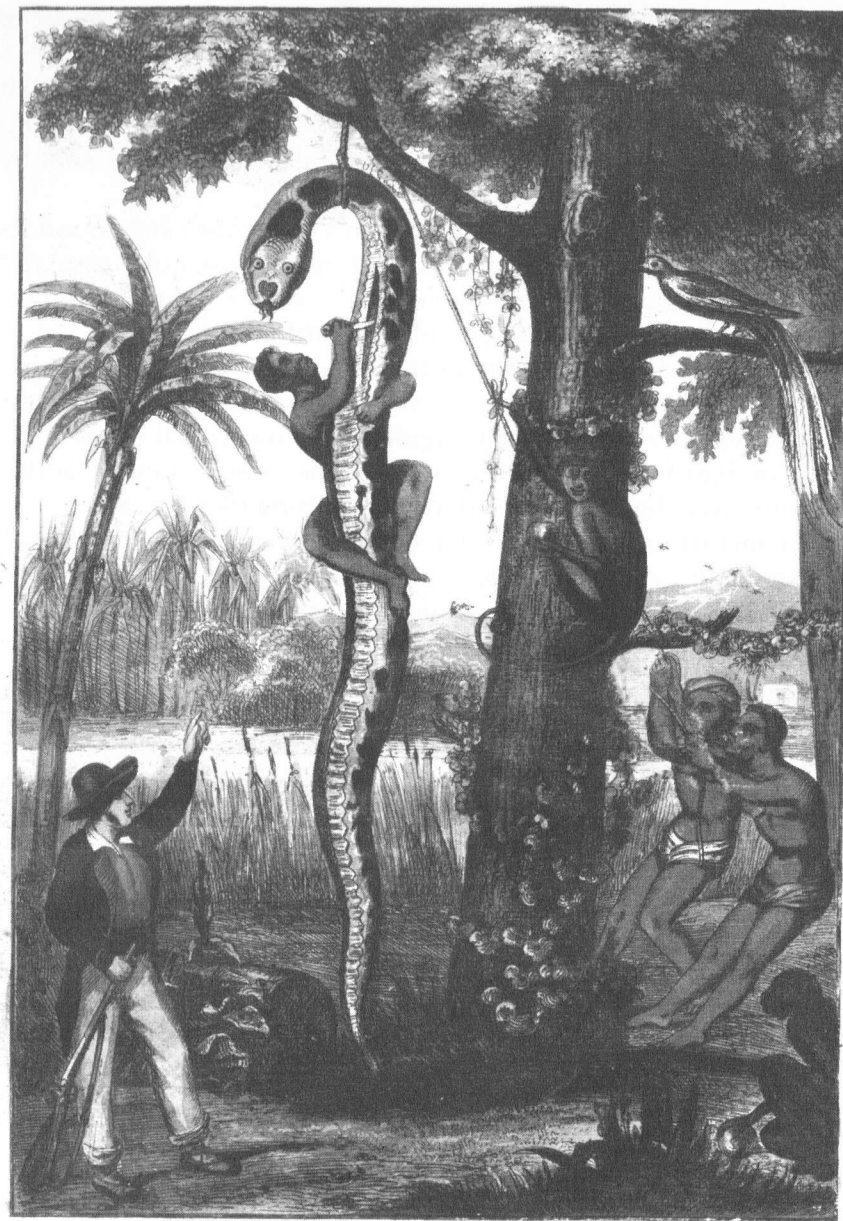


Fig. 8. *Természet-Historiája Gyermekek' Számára. A' Kor' Kívánata'hoz Alkalmazva Kijavított Stancsics Mihál.* Harmadik, javított kiadás. Pesten, Emich Gusztáv sajátja. 1846. Frontispiece picture.

(Courtesy of National Széchenyi Library, Budapest). Reduced.

Narrative of a Five Years Expedition against the Revolted Negroes of Surinam in London, 1790. It is in the series of pictures added to this work that the original of the frontispiece picture of the 'Hungarian Raff' is to be found. It is an etching made originally by William Blake, and was entitled 'The skinning of the Aboma Snake, shot by Cap. Stedman' (See Fig. 7).⁴²

This picture—like others of Stedman's *Narrative*—has found its way to East-Central Europe, to the printing houses of Kassa and Buda in the Kingdom of Hungary, and it was being used and re-used again there in a completely different context of a schoolbook—editions of Raff continued until 1846 in this country. In the re-making of the image, however, the Hungarian engravers and painters have used their imagination so much that the original Blake is hardly recognizable among the many, newly added elements, and changes of position and clothing (See Fig. 8).

In conclusion, however, I have to say that Raff's schoolbook fundamentally *divided* peoples and cultures. Constructing a basic opposition between, as we would say today, the 'West and the rest', it moulded non-Western-European and non-European peoples into some powerful visual stereotypes and uniform ways of representation. These peoples and societies not only became frozen, 'show-case' characters in the process of clustering and scholarly categorization taught in the schoolbook, but they were used for the current philosophical, pedagogical, esthetical and

political ends of the age. This is especially unfortunate in the case of non-European indigenous peoples—Asian, African or American aboriginals—who did not even have the opportunity to let their own voices be heard, and to make their own 'cultural translations' of Georg Christian Raff.

⁴² I am grateful to Natalie Zemon Davis for identifying this picture as a piece of Blake's art, made after Stedman's original drawing. She is currently preparing a book—with the working title *Braided Histories*—on Stedman and the colonial slave society in Suriname. In October 2009 I had the opportunity to check the editions of Stedman's *Narrative*—and Blake's pictures included in them—in the following collections: the University Library, Cambridge which has a black-and-white edition, see John Gabriel Stedman, *Narrative of a Five Years' Expedition against the Revolted Negroes of Surinam*, 2 vols (London: Printed for J. Johnson & J. Edwards, 1796), the drawing of the 'Aboma snake' is in vol. 1, picture facing p. 174; the British Library, London, where a coloured version of the same edition is to be found and the drawing of the 'Aboma snake' is in the same place there; and the Special Collections of the University Library of Glasgow in which a later, beautifully coloured edition is preserved, see *Narrative of a Five Years' Expedition against the Revolted Negroes of Surinam*, 2 vols (London: Printed for J. Johnson & Th. Payne, 1806), and the drawing of the 'Aboma snake' is in vol. 1, picture facing p. 182.